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Further Observations for leaving the Romish church; by James Crowley, late student at Maynooth.

MONTHLY RETROSPECT OF POLITICS.

WHAT are we to understand by a Legislative Union? What can possibly be meant but AN UNITY OF LEGISLATION? That is to say, there is not to be one law for one portion of the empire, and a rule of totally a different kind and nature for another portion, not a *Janus* constitution, not a double-faced government. Not a *pet* law for three-fourths of the empire, and a partial, or more properly a penal law for the remaining quarter. This is a strange sort of *Legislative Union*. We are said to be a people prone to bulls and blunders; but really such a political solecism as this harmonious discord, this order of confusion, this repulsive consolidation, this anarchic conciliation, was never before heard of. It is so legal, yet so ludicrous, that the professional man may smile at it in his sleeve, while the aggrieved part of the people weep at it, in their hearts.

We would even venture to assert, that an acquaintance with the first

principles or rudiments of grammar, might have, in the present case, corrected the illiberal and illiterate politician. First principles are nearly the same in letters, and in liberty, in the construction of words in speech, and the right ordering of men in society. What indeed forms the syntax of society? Its parts are two—concord, and government. There is such a necessary connexion between these parts, that he who is master of the *first*, canot be ignorant of the *second*. But how there can be just government without any regard to *concord*; how there can be unity of legislation, and at the same time a vindictive spirit and system of exclusion; how there can be legislative union, and at the same time a perpetual political distinction, comprising a perpetual personal disqualification; how there can be conciliation and compact, with constant exasperation and recrimination, we must leave to those who seem to know as little of the gram-

mar of the English language, as of the Genius of the English constitution. *That* grammar, simple and natural in itself, has been defaced by apparent or figurative construction; and *that* constitution has been plastered over by the finesse of politicians, and the fictions of lawyers, like some noble sculpture of antiquity, under a thick coating of paint.

The truth appears to be, that as long as THE CATHOLIC QUESTION will continue to occupy the cabinet, and involve the counsels of government, in a constant puzzle and perplexity, so long the constitution itself, during all this period of struggle between right and expediency, principle and passion, must lose much of its real nature, and all its *good nature*. From being of secondary and minor importance, the subject of Catholic emancipation has been gradually amplifying into a magnitude, no longer of safe procrastination, and an easy sine die adjournment. The ministers in council may revert to the order, or rather, what may be termed, the disorder of the day, the standing political embarrassment, and we dare to say, that on breaking up the council, several have retired, muttering in moody discontent, "When shall we have done with this cursed Catholic question?" In this state of mind, of corrosive vexation, are these statesmen to administer the British constitution to the good people of these kingdoms, while these same ministers, are, at the same time, seeking for every resource to perpetuate the war.

The constitution cannot be seen under its natural aspect, while this question so deranges the judgment, and bewilders the imagination, and sours the tempers of those who are called into administration. Never will the benign and blessed consti-

tution be felt, while the question asked is not, whether is this man fit for his office, but is this man pre-determined on this particular topic? Has he pledged himself never to admit the Catholics of Ireland into an intercommunion of parliamentary privilege, and thus qualified himself as Premier, by turning the constitution into a corporation, from the franchises of which one fifth of the whole population of the empire is excluded, although at the same time connected by a legislative and incorporate union? The Catholic question has, therefore, disturbed, and, until it be settled, will continue to disturb, and, if we may use the term, to *pervert* the British constitution, both in its spirit and in its practice. It fills the heads and hearts of the functionaries of government with a factionary sentiment, instead of a tutelary one, with feelings vindictive, rather than protective, with pains and penalties, rather than benefits and blessings.

"Et nous n'avons du ciel imité que la foudre."

Thus the character of the constitution *itself* seems to change and deteriorate with the character of the administrators. It becomes the "Jupiter tonans," jealous and irascible; not the good and gracious Deity, "summa placidum caput extulens unda"—"collectasque fugans nubes, soiemque reducens." It is disliked abroad. It is depreciated at home. The petted and privileged portion of the *people* catch the resemblance, grow capricious and tyrannical, usurp over the rights of other nations, and insult an humiliated portion in its own. *JUSTICE*, is no longer the consolidation of the state, and they find at length, "that leagues are formed by nations against an usurping people, as naturally, as among the inhabitants of a country against

an usurping individual." JUSTICE is no longer the consolidation of the state; and they look on with indifference while partial laws are promulgated against their fellow subjects, and the Bill of Rights is suffered to sneak in, by way of fruitless provision, in a penal act of Parliament, prohibitory of the first right of suffering nature.

We are, therefore, inclined to believe that until the Catholic question rests in the peace of accomplishment, not merely the existing administration, but the constitution itself; not merely the constitution itself, but the good fame of the *English people* will suffer incalculable and irreparable injury. The manners of a people are formed on the model of their laws. If the latter be ferocious, and sanguinary, the character of the people will gradually assume the same complexion. The American war, we think, contributed in no small degree, to injure the character of the British nation. The succession of vindictive acts at that time promulgated, obscured, at once, their true greatness and the glory of their constitution. It was a war which contaminated the people of England, and prostituted the pen of Dr. Johnson. The first lost their principles in the suggestions of self-interest, and the latter disingenuously entitled his pamphlet, " Taxation no Tyranny," which was true, when he ought to have said, " Taxation, without representation, a great Tyranny;" and all America would then have been satisfied. The character which America contributed to degrade, let Britain beware, lest her behaviour to Ireland may utterly destroy. There is an acceleration in the downward character of a public, as well as of an individual, and a nation, as well as, a single person, may sit down infamous and contented.

Britons ought to thank the Catholics of Ireland for having interpreted the letter of the law, in the spirit of the constitution. They ought to recognize the co-heirs of Magna Charta, and the brothers of the Bill of Rights, whether in the forests of America, or in the bogs of Ireland. They ought to join in the protest against the *perpetuation* of rigorous laws, made on particular emergencies, and enacted on the spur of the occasion, laws made under the influence of passion, or of arbitrary principle, replete with the characteristic spleen and petulance of an individual, not the sober and well-weighed result of an impartial consideration of the whole case, in all its bearings, and with all its consequences. It is against thus entailing upon the state a real and permanent evil, to get rid of a temporary inconvenience, that every true Briton ought to protest. If our common rights and liberties remain thus long in a state of *suspension*, is there not evident danger of their being *hanged* outright? The convention act has for eighteen years overshadowed the constitution in this Island; and thus it is, that our dearest privileges will be set aside once for a time, and again for a time, and then for ever. A dictator was appointed seldom, and on the pressure of immediate necessity, which quickly passed away. But a perpetual dictator was tyranny complete and irreversible. The constitution, if it means any thing, means something stable and settled, but now the constitution is occasional, and the rigorous law perpetual, long after the exigence has passed away, which was supposed to create its necessity.

The convention act was thus *supposed*, and by the Law officers of the crown declared to be levelled only against an imaginary congress to be held at Athlone. "For myself," said

the Attorney General, "I declare, and I believe, I may for every one concerned in the Bill, that such an idea never entered into their minds, to allude to the Catholic convention." "Suppose," said Lord Clare, "the county of Dublin, for instance, lawfully assembled, this act does not prevent a few persons retiring from the rest to draw up a petition for the rest, and if the rest approve, and sign that petition, it does not prevent them from offering it to any branch of the Legislature." Such was *then* the ministerial interpretation, but what is it now, since they have gotten an enactment of the Law? The truth was, a spectre at Athlone was summoned up to terrify into a Law dispensing with the constitution, and prohibitory of all popular assemblies. That was the pretext, this was the real purpose. The history of that time will give a view instructive to posterity, of the various *Pretexts* which were then invented to impose upon credulity and alarm, and to give a plausible ground for the enactment of a series of severe laws that followed one another, and flashed upon the people in rapid succession. These laws were themselves to serve as *Pretexts* for the grand and ultimate *PURPOSE*, that purpose which lay, like the head of the serpent, in the centre of numerous folds, and wiles inextricable by an inexperienced, and, if we may say so, a shallow people. It will be shown, alas too late for any service to ourselves, that all these laws were to form a body of evidence, for the grand purpose, viz. to manifest the absolute necessity of an *UNION*, and to prove to the satisfaction of the credulous country gentlemen, the great advantage of surrendering on the spur of the occasion, the *Independence* of their native land—for ever.

Under such circumstances, the Catholics of this country, have done

well. In the ship-wreck of independence, they have clung to the last plank of the constitution. When they compare the temper of the country to what it was, even so short a way back as the year 1792, they may felicitate themselves on the progress of their cause. It was, in that year, resolved at a meeting of Freeholders in a certain country (we will not help by naming it, to transmit its disgrace) with not more than three dissentients. "That it would be *at any time*, and *under any circumstances*, highly inexpedient, and dangerous to the Constitution in Church and State, that the Roman Catholics should be admitted to the *Elective Franchise*." The Catholics have gotten the Elective Franchise, and as near as, *then*, they were to that privilege, are they, *now*, to an adequate share of representation in Parliament. They have, since the year 1792, gained many friends among the Protestants of Ireland, and the adversaries of their emancipation maintain that silence which may be fairly interpreted as acquiescence. We are to judge of the country at large, as of the last Catholic meeting in this county. Many Protestants attended the latter who gave their *tacit* consent to the business of the day, for no one can suppose they came to such a meeting from any motive of mere curiosity. And so it is with the People of Ireland at large. No Grand Jury resolutions. No Corporation assertions of Ascendancy. No Lives and Fortunes staked upon the question.

Such is the fruit of *resolute* and *active* perseverance, not a lazy, lingering long suffering, and passiveness under oppression, which provokes and almost justifies its continuance. There is a perseverance, if it can be called so, that acts by fits and starts, an intermittent perseverance which will never attain its end. If the

Catholics ever allow their cause to drop out of the public mind, it will be lost perhaps for ever. Let them keep up their attempts in constant succession, as the continual drop of water makes a hollow even in the stone. The tide of the times is in their favour. "I shall come in," said the prudent and politic Dr. Paley, "with the next wave, and that will be a larger." It is thus that a just and patriotic question comes forward in a succession of waves, and the last still larger than the former. And it is true that the accession of such men as Dr. Paley, is what amplifies the wave, and gives it, at length, irresistible momentum. But what would have become of the Catholic Cause, or what must be the fate of any great patriotic object, if the great literary men of the day, say with the sagacious Paley, "I shall come in with the next wave, and then, he whispers to himself, there is no fear of my being stranded?" O if the Catholic cause had from the first to look for support to men of profession, and literary honours, or to Lawyers looking at and looking for the bench; or to Divines looking during the day and during the night, for a Bishopric; or to Fellows of a college looking for a Provostship; or to Country gentlemen looking for a title, or to a Clergy looking for an increase of the king's bounty, (in polite literature) the "Regium Donum," or to the heads of parliamentary parties, or to their tails;—O if the Catholic cause had waited for these great men, who are now wisely waiting "for the next wave," it would have waited long, and very unprofitably. It was the number of little men which formed the great wave, by their junction, their zeal, and their activity, not the men of large promise, and much expectation.

When men of flashy dress are presented to Bonaparte, he has been
BELFAST MAG. NO. XXXIX.

said to put sometimes a prompt and puzzling question—*Qu' a t'il fait?* *What has he done?* This certainly is a home question to the majority of a Court Levee. In the Catholic cause, that is to say, the cause, as now it may be called, of the whole country, we know not of any individual, who could answer a question of that sort, with such alacrity, and honest confidence without the smallest presumption, as JOHN KEOGH, esq. What has this man done? He took up the cause of the Catholics when in its most desolate and destitute state, nor quitted it until the powers of nature were quitting him. He took up their cause, when it was in a condition such as it had been at the time in which the Catholic confederates exclaimed, "We take God to witness that there are no limits set to the scorn and infamy that are cast upon us, and we will be in the esteem of loyal subjects, or die to a man." He took up the cause of his suffering countrymen, when not even hope was to be found at the bottom of their bitter cup, when the Catholics were not even permitted to insert a little clause in their address to the Lord Lieutenant at Cork, expressive of a hope of some future redress of their multiplied grievances. In this state, of oppression on the one part, and of apathy on the other, he roused the Catholics to a sense of their situation. He drew around him, by the magnetism of a powerful mind, the concurrence, and combination of the most enlightened, though not the most elevated, part of that community. He broke the thraldom in which that community had been long held by its own aristocracy, respectable in their personal capacities, but in their public characters, miserably obsequious, and he laid the foundation of a good understanding between the Catholic, and Protestant, and Presbyterian, on the best interests of

their common country. It was this man who made "*the first wave*," which was the cause of all successive ones, and when Plenary Emancipation is, as it were, launched on the full tide of the times, under the auspices of the Prince Regent, and with the concurrence of a convinced Parliament, and the acclamations of an united Empire, let not the merits of this individual be forgotten, but let Time hand the name to History with gratitude and respect.

Catholic meetings have now taken place in every one of the thirty-two counties of Ireland, with the concurrence of a very large portion of what has been selfishly called the Protestant *Interest*, as if there never was to be a *social community* upon Irish ground. And we have now to notice the first meeting of the NEW GENERAL COMMITTEE OF THE CATHOLICS OF IRELAND, held on the 19th instant, in which a draft of their petition was read and recommended to the adoption of the respective counties, cities, towns, and parishes. In looking at the account of this meeting, we should at first sight be almost tempted to think that there was a sort of latent understanding with the Castle in the business, the interruption given was so trifling, and even farcical. It resembled the play that the children call "hide and go seek," or "I spy;" and it seems to prove that the administration of the day has not yet fixed upon any plan, but are pendulating between coercion and conciliation. It is now, if ever, that the Catholics ought to be watchful of their measures, and of their men.

On the whole, we think there is great reason to hope that the petition of the Roman Catholics of Ireland to the Legislature, will be attended with success. May the sentiments expressed by a Catholic Chancellor of France (De l'Hopital) outweigh the opinion of an Irish Chancellor,

and have their due influence on the minds of every member of Parliament.

"L'objet de vos deliberations doit rouler sur ce point unique. Est il avantageux au royaume *dans les circonstances presentes*, de permettre, ou de defendre les assemblies des *calvinistes*? Pour decider, il n'est pas necessaire de deliberer sur le fond de la religion. Supposant meme, celle des calvinistes mauvaise, est ce une raison de proscrire ceux qui en font profession? ne peut on pas etre bon sujet du Roi, sans etre Catholique, et meme Chretien? N'allez donc pas fatiguer a chercher laquelle des deux religions est la meilleure. NOUS SOMMES ICI NON POUR ETABLIR LA FOI, MAIS POUR REGLER L'ETAT."

For ever consecrated be the memory of the Sage l'Hopital! A Chancellor of Ireland, in the first reading of the Convention act, made the penalty for being delegated by such assemblies, *transportation for seven years*, but graciously condescended to substitute the penalty "of a high misdemeanour." We have observed somewhat of the same vigorous administration, lately displayed in the Island of Jamáica. Among the laws lately passed is one "to prevent Preaching and Teaching by persons not duly qualified, and to restrain meetings of a dangerous nature *on pretence of attending such preaching and teaching.*" The penalties of this West Indian convention act, are, for the first offence, considerable fine, for the second, imprisonment, and with regard to *slaves*, public flogging, to the extent of thirty-nine lashes! Is there not reason to believe that the promulgation of the principles, and equalizing spirit of christianity is a subject of serious apprehension to the *Planter ascendancy*? The spirit of that gospel which humbles the Tyrant, and elevates the Slave. He who preaches it, is pro-

bably deemed a Jacobinical sower of sedition, and instigator of rebellion. "Under the pretence of being a Preacher and Teacher, he means to make an insurrection among our slaves, and the law must punish for acting under what we chuse to call this pretence." Merciful God, what deeds may be committed by thus ascribing motives to those whom we wish to treat as enemies; and have under our power!

Under the pretence that they were plotting, or that they *would* plan rebellion in his absence on an expedition to Mecca, the Pacha of Egypt introduced five or six hundred Mamelukes between the outer and inner walls of the Castle of Cairo, and while they rode in peaceful procession, to do honour to himself and his son, and had just come into a situation where cowardice was sheltered, and courage was unavailing, he ordered the Turkish guards to begin the fire, and the unhappy Mamelukes were massacred to a man.

While the Catholic inhabitants of Ireland are acting with zeal and perseverance in the cause of emancipation, it is to be lamented that a quietism, approaching to apathy, characterizes the rest of the Irish community. The Catholic cause may be thought to acquire energy by its concentration. The nearer a public approaches to a selfish question, the greater interest and activity will it excite; and however large the portion, the Catholic subject is peculiarly interesting only to a part of the people. The Protestants have only been accessory, and as adjectives in this business, yet, in truth, they are equally included in the purview of these laws, prohibitory, as they are, of the common benefits of the Constitution. The Protestants (under which term we always mean to include the Presbyterians) are as substantially aggrieved, and they are equally called upon as men and citizens to protest

against the occasionality of the Constitution, and the perpetuity of laws, penal in their nature, and indiscriminate in their application. The Protestants helped to make the Catholics shake off their torpor and long oblivion. It would be well if the Protestant spirit were now, in return, excited by the energy and union of their Catholic cotriymen. Petitions declaratory of their Constitutional rights, ought at this moment to reverberate from the Protestant part of the community, not merely in correspondence with the Catholic, but to assert and vindicate the common constitutional right.

Let meetings be called of towns, and counties, to prepare Petitions to Parliament for the repeal of any act or acts which, in any manner, tend to prevent or impede the people of Ireland, or any part or description of them, from exercising either personally, or by delegation, their inestimable right of petitioning the king, or either House of Parliament, acknowledged and confirmed to them by the Bill of Rights; and for obtaining such a Reform in the Representation of the People in the Common House of Parliament, as shall secure the People of this country from any future infringement on this second Great Charter of our Liberties.

It has not been our practice to give an extended article under the head of Public Occurrences, although it is so easy to form selections from the papers of the day, but it was judged better not to fill our pages with materials to which our readers had previously access, but to confine the relation of occurrences mostly to such articles as do not find their way into our Irish prints. In the present number, we give among the occurrences some highly interesting proceedings of the Electors of Southwark, of the Essex Club, and of the inhabitants

of Winchester, the two former supporting the propriety of returning members to parliament *free of expense*, and the latter vindicating themselves from the attempt to make their corporation the heir-loom of a family, who with an effrontery too common, sought to prescribe in what manner their votes should be disposed of.

The freedom of election is a most material branch of Parliamentary reform. In vain the rotten boroughs may be lopped off, if the counties and large towns are not set free from the shackles imposed by the aristocracy, and the influence of government, operating directly thro' the places and pensions, which are in their power to bestow, and indirectly thro' the aristocracy, who too often disgrace themselves by becoming paupers, and dependents of a higher order, obsequiously servile to the minister, who, for the day, rules the distribution of the public spoil. By an accidental effect, arising from the Union, the smaller boroughs in Ireland have been disfranchised, and yet the freedom of election is not restored. Hence we may evidently perceive, that a reform which only took away the decayed and close boroughs, would materially fail of gratifying the reasonable expectations of the people. The remedies must go deeper. The people must be aroused to a sense of their duty, and of the dignity, which peculiarly belongs to an honest discharge of the electoral duty. Members should be returned free of expense, that as they did not buy their seats, they should have no pretext for selling their votes, but consider themselves freely returned, and holding their seats merely as trustees on behalf of their constituents, for the benefit of the community at large. In the present system, needy adventurers may start for the representation of a county, and if they can for a time

raise funds sufficient to debauch the electors, may calculate on ample returns to be made by the sale of a vote, which is well known to be at all times a marketable commodity with the ministry. Men of moderate fortunes, but of honest principles, are deterred from encountering the expenses of a contested election; they hesitate to injure their families by a heavy expense, while their honesty forbids them from basely betraying their trust. An elector conscious of his dignity, would spurn at having his expenses going to the place of election defrayed by another. Few but could afford to bear his own charges, if he considered the affair of giving his vote, as his own proper business. According to the present system, he feels himself little interested, he goes on his landlord's business, not his own, and throughout the tenor of his political life, he submits to the degradation of character attendant on his situation. He too seldom views himself in any other light than as the convenient tool of his landlord's ambition or interest, and conforms to the degrading brand of belonging to his flock, to be driven to an election without any wish of his own, and meanly estimates himself

"As cujum pecus, whose vile herd he'll be."

Reform, to be radical and effectual, must attack the most prevailing errors of the system, and the influence of landlords is at present one of the most prominent.

Let the reform proceed on practical, not on theoretical principles. Here at the very outset, let a specific remedy be applied to the prevailing evil. Guard the tenantry against the influence of landlords, by allowing them to give their votes by ballot, and permitting the poll to be taken in districts, to avoid expense. Enlarge the number of voters, by admitting to all house-keepers who are

not paupers, the right of voting equally with those who have what is called freehold property. Make elections, biennial, or at most triennial. By such measures, the freedom of elections would be secured. Few would buy, when it would be difficult to ascertain whether they receive what they bought, and by increasing the number, it would lessen the wages of venality to each individual elector, and render it more difficult for the candidate to purchase so many, while the short duration of parliament would make the purchase still less valuable to the man who would seek a seat in parliament, either by direct bribery, or the no less dishonourable means of aristocratic influence. The House of Commons ought to be the real representatives of the people. We ought no longer to hear that the Marquis of Hertford, and Earl O'Neil have coalesced, and are sufficiently strong to rule the representation of the county of Antrim, nor ought the people to feel an interest, which rough-rider should succeed best in ruling the county of Down. The people, and the people only have an interest in elections, regardless of all degrading, and unconstitutional claims set up by the rival houses of Hill or Stewart.

In the meantime, while corruption reigns triumphant, reformers are exposed to the shafts of obloquy, but happily, if they give no cause, these arrows rebound on their adversaries. A swindler in London, on his trial lately, for obtaining money under false pretences as a mendicant, quite in character attacked Major Cartwright, who appeared as an evidence, and abused him as a reformer. The Major consistently opposes and exposes not only the fraudulent mendicant, but also the no less villainous schemes of the peculators in ruffles.

As a prominent feature in modern manners, we cannot forbear to cen-

sure the accounts of the late battle between Crib and Molyneaux, so copiously detailed in the public prints. The patrician support afforded, is a disgrace to the civilization of Britain.

The Catholic meeting for the county of Antrim was held in Belfast on the 10th inst. and was numerously attended. A full and accurate account of the proceedings is placed among the public occurrences in this number. It may be seen that attempts were made to plead the causes of civil and religious liberty, on broad, comprehensive principles, and to introduce the subjects of parliamentary reform and complete liberty of conscience. In accurately delineating the character of this meeting, it is necessary to attend to the different component parts of which it consisted. The Catholic feeling was good, and the speech of Mark Devlin did great credit to his head, and to his heart. A speech more appropriately fitted for the occasion, at once conciliatory and rousing to a true sense of patriotism, and of right feeling in the present crisis, has seldom been delivered. During the delivery of it, and while the cause of civil and religious liberty was pleaded, a generous enthusiasm pervaded the bulk of the meeting, and the people in the middle classes of society, who composed the majority of the assembly, manifested by their plaudits and countenances, on which side their feelings were engaged. But on the part of that portion of society, which may be styled the commercial aristocracy, more animation would have been desirable. Some of them gave their attendance, but for want of making a marked expression of their sentiments, left it in doubt, whether they were actuated in their attendance by curiosity, or a decided disposition to support unequivocally the cause of liberality.

They gave no countenance to a resolution in favour of universal liberty of conscience, which was introduced to put to the test their liberality; they stood aloof under the cold pretext that such a resolution might interfere too much with the other business of the meeting; but it suits with the character of some men, to like no plan which they do not happen to be the first to suggest. It is only justice to add that the Catholics who were consulted, unequivocally declared their hearty concurrence in the resolution, if it had been supported by the Protestant part of the assembly. On a fair review of the result of the meeting, a painful suggestion occurs, that in some classes, the slumbering spirit of patriotism is not yet awakened. Let it be remembered that in the large town of Belfast, once so famous for its public spirit, and still retaining in public estimation a high character, founded on a recollection of better days, and possessing so many capable, if they had been willing of expressing publicly their sentiments, only one of its inhabitants on the part of the Protestants ventured to raise the accents of true patriotism, and genuine public spirit, in favour of parliamentary reform. With others, the ice-bound apathy remained unthawed. Half measures and temporizing expedients remain the order of the day. Surely Belfast stands greatly in need of some patriotic spirited leaders to step forward to assist in embodying the floating, unconnected mass of right-feeling, which is now scattered, and suffering for want of proper direction, in its extensive population.

Although the times cannot be considered as favourable to the cause of complete liberty of conscience, yet honourable exceptions exist. Earl Stanhope is an intrepid champion in this cause. In a letter written lately, in answer to a request that he would present a petition to

the House of Lords on some subjects of relief, he replies, "I will readily present the petition to the House of Lords, on the subjects mentioned. There is no degree of relief which any non-conformists are, or can be justly entitled to, that I shall not, *at all times*, be desirous to obtain for them. But it may be matter of doubt, whether the two points specified, should be the subject of a separate bill, or whether they should be included in that bill of relief, of which I last session gave notice, that it was my intention to introduce next year. In order to obtain success, the precise mode of proceeding will depend upon the circumstances of the times."

It is to be regretted, that public spirit, that virtue which dares to be honest in the worst of times, is at so very low an ebb in the various parts of the empire. For the decay of this ennobling virtue is in every part apparent. Men may cover their tergiversation under the most plausible pretexts, they may descant loudly on the mistakes made by the French in the cause of liberty, dwelling on the dark side, and acknowledged errors of this astonishing and stupendous event, they may boast of themselves being bettered by the correction of the iron-hand of power, and they may say, Fort George was a useful school. Such are dupes to their false reasoning: "though the head may be still flourishing, the heart decays."

It has been our aim to rouse the slumbering, and in some cases almost extinct spirit of liberty; and such will be our aim, so long as a share of public favour is liberally granted as to induce us to believe that we continue to receive the support of the sound part of the community.

"To virtue only, and her friends a friend,
The world beside may murmur or commend."

If the people do not support us, we may cease from the labour of toiling in vain, but we trust our love of freedom will remain unabated, and unextinguishable.

As to the war in Portugal, it is hard for us to give any political, and would be presumptuous in us to give any military opinion. So much marching and countermarching, so many positions taken and resigned, so many demonstrations made, and such an incessant display of grand manœuvre, must make a fine *study* for military men upon the map, and the whole campaign an excellent school of discipline for officers and soldiers. It is true indeed, that our *schooling* is a very *expensive one*, and we question whether the knowledge acquired be worth the millions with which it has been purchased. We fear it will turn out, a war not so much of fighting as of finance; not of battles, but of bullion; and when Marmont, after advancing with a force of 60,000 men, suddenly takes it into his head to fall back again, without any reason expressed or implied by Lord Wellington, and divides the army that he had just before concentered, it has, we own, much the appearance of keeping up, rather than putting an end to the war, so onerous, as it is, to the finances of Great Britain. But it serves, at least, to keep the war at a distance from our own shores. Why, this it may do for a year or two, at an expense that must rapidly accelerate the death of public credit, but it is to our NAVY we must trust at last—and why not now? Why not get rid of this most burthensome and unprofitable expenditure abroad, and let our fleets become the circulating batteries of the British Empire. We have one question to put. How will the British army on the continent be adequately *provisioned*, should war

take place with *America*? We have heard from persons most likely to be well informed upon the subject, that the harvest of this year will not enable us to do well without an import from America, and whether our armies abroad can be sufficiently supported without such assistance, it is not easy to say. An embargo in America may, in this respect, turn out a blockade of Britain.

After having enlarged so fully on our domestic situation, we have but little space left for remarks on the state of our foreign affairs. The effects of the administration of our concerns at home are, from their importance, deserving to be first considered. A nation, under the safeguard of public spirit, may be happy without foreign conquest, and wanting the invigorating energies of freedom, may be miserable amid the most splendid victories. Of the latter, Rome afforded a fatal warning, but when mismanagement at home was combined with injudicious expeditions abroad, the decline and fall of that once powerful empire was rapidly accelerated by the combined operation of these two potent causes of downfall.

We have just seen the public mind excited by strong hopes from rumours of a great victory in Portugal. Every means were resorted to by the government prints that the delusion should be kept up, and the cullibility of the nation was once more practiced on. When will the people recover their senses, to see through these stratagems of a venal press? A nation thus blindly credulous, rush on to the crisis of their fate, and if they obstinately persist, must in the end fall unpitied, the dupes to their own fatuity. Although the late affairs in Portugal had all the qualities of a defeat evinced by the prudent and judicious retreat of the British army, and by the French

accomplishing their object of relieving Ciudad Rodrigo, yet one consolation remains; less fatal waste of lives attended, than in the former battles, which were equally unsuccessful in attaining any of the permanent effects of victory. The British army, it is said, are retreating into winter quarters to avoid the effects of the rainy season, and accounts state, that disease has made its appearance among them to an alarming extent.

Our affairs with the United States of North America do not assume a brighter appearance. We have not an administration, which knows how to concede to just claims with dignity. When they ought to grant grandly, they will most probably, in the special pleading style of a civilian, bicker about words and forms of expression. They thus lose the benefits of a firm and spirited style of negotiation, while by this littleness, they irritate and encourage their opponents. The Congress at its meeting, will most likely continue the non-importation, and the non-intercourse except in their own ships, with additional and more strict regulations. England will probably retaliate by orders in council, and in the end, unless the system of neutrals is radically changed, war is likely to be the result. In the mean time, France freely concedes, and by indubitable proofs gives up the Berlin and Milan decrees, in hopes by such conciliatory conduct, to league America with her in defence of the system, which they call the freedom of the sea.

Spanish America proceeds "thro' perils, toils, and death," in the road to independence. Buenos Ayres and Monte Video are at open war. Carracca and the adjacent territory under the guidance of Miranda have published a declaration of independence. Part is borrowed from the famous declaration of North Ameri-

can independence, the product of the energetic pen of the patriot Jefferson. The language of the present declaration breathes the accents of freedom, and speaks well. May deeds, "unequivocal authentic deeds," confirm and ratify their words! It is sincerely to be wished that this revolution may suffer neither by a decay of energy, nor by the excesses committed in the abused name of liberty.

In Spain the Cortes have published a constitution. In the beginning, they sanction the important and just principle of the majesty of the people, and proclaim, "that the Spanish nation is free and independent, and neither is, nor can be, the patrimony of any family, or individual." This is right. We anxiously wish they may follow up in practice, the spirit of this resolution. Then might we hope to see the resistance of a people, against whom, if they are fully united on principle, the legions of Bonaparte would be as impotent, as the concert of princes was found to be against the new born liberties of France. But we have seen so much versatility, and want of following up declarations with energy, by the Spanish nation, that fears unbidden intrude, lest their constitution should be "a voice, and nothing more." "Vox et præterea nihil." Nor are those fears abated, when another article of the constitution is considered, which declares the establishment of the holy Roman Apostolic religion to the exclusion of all others. Human imperfection is insinuated often into our best schemes, and by its admixture vitiates the mass.

It looks probable that Sicily will not much longer be ranked as an ally, but most probably be seized as a hostile country. Such is the uncertainty of foreign allies, and such the miserable effects of subsidizing states to fight for themselves. Under

such circumstances we can expect no better than that they will choose masters, as suits their self-interests, and continue allies of England no longer than motives of policy or caprice may influence.

From these circumstances it is an object of sincere regret to hear that endeavours are used to stir up another war against Bonaparte in the north of Europe. If these misguided efforts are successful, we may expect to see acted over again, the former comedy, or tragedy of "All in the wrong," fresh subsidies farther to impoverish the exhausted finances of Britain, plans without concert unsustained by the principle of common interest, consequent defeat, and ultimately the more firm establishment of the colossian power of France, a circumstance lamented more strongly, and on more solid, consistent principles by the friends of liberty, than it can be by the advocates of monopoly, who are quite reconciled to any despotism, except the despotism of France. On that subject, they hypocritically whine, and bring forward all the cant of unselt affection in favour of liberty, while the principles of slavery reconciled to them, by the selfish emoluments they enjoy, or the luxurious ease on which they so indolently repose, are deeply rooted in their hearts.

DOCUMENTS.

SOUTH AMERICA.

INDEPENDENCE OF SOUTH AMERICA,

In the name of the most high.

We, the Representatives of the Federal Provinces of Carracas, Cumaná, Barinas, Margarita, Barcelona, Merida, and Truxillo, constituting the Confederation of Venezuela, on the Southern Continent of America, in Congress assembled; considering that we have been in the full and entire possession of our natural rights since the 19th of April, 1810, which we re-assumed in consequence of the transaction at Bay-

BELFAST MAG. NO. XXXIX.

onne, the abdication of the Spanish Throne, by the conquest of Spain, and the accession of a new dynasty, established without our consent. While we avail ourselves of the rights of men, which have been withheld from us by force for more than three centuries, and to which we are restored by the political revolutions in human affairs, we think it becoming to state to the world the reasons by which we are called to the free exercise of the sovereign authority.

We deem it unnecessary to insist upon the unquestionable right which *every conquered country holds to restore itself to liberty and independence*; we pass over in a generous silence the long series of afflictions which the fatal laws of conquest have indiscriminately involved the discoverers, conquerors, and settlers, of these countries; whose condition has been made wretched by the very means which should have promoted their felicity: throwing a veil over three centuries of Spanish dominion in America, we shall confine ourselves to the narration of recent and well known facts, which prove how much we have been afflicted, and that we should not be involved in the commotions, disorders, and conquests which have divided Spain.

The disorders in Europe had increased the evils under which we before suffered; by obstructing complaints, and frustrating the means of redress; by authorizing the Governors placed over us by Spain, to insult and oppress us with impunity, leaving us without the protection or the support of the laws.

It is contrary to the order of nature, impracticable in relation to the government of Spain, and has been most afflicting to America, that territories so much more extensive, and a population incomparably more numerous should be subjected and dependent on a peninsular corner of the European Continent.

The cession and abdication made at Bayonne; the transactions at the Escorial and at Aranjuez, and the orders issued by the Imperial Lieutenant, the Marshal Duke of Berg, to America, authorised the exercise to those rights, which until that period the Americans had sacrificed to the preservation and integrity of the Spanish nation.

The people of Venezuela were the first, who generally acknowledged, and who preferred that integrity, never forsaking the interests of their European brethren,

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